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Program Evaluation and Research Unit

Stress, Burnout, and Trauma Through the Eyes of First Responders and Health Care Workers



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Presenter Info



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First Responders and Health Care Workers

Looking at Stress, Burnout, and Trauma



Learning Objectives

1. Identify signs and symptoms of **stress, burnout, and trauma**.
2. Explain what **compassion fatigue** is.
3. Identify different effective ways of **self-care**.
4. Describe the three workplace **screenings** for first responders and health care workers.



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Vision

PERU is dedicated to meaningful work that facilitates each patient or community member's ability to achieve optimal health, well-being, recovery, and choice.



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Innovative Health Systems Initiatives (IHSI) Portfolio

To enable health systems to conceptualize and integrate innovations to optimize service quality, patient outcomes, and cost savings, while achieving their vision for all patients and communities they serve.



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Community Health Initiatives (CHI) Portfolio

Is dedicated to building and strengthening the well-being and resilience of communities through data-driven, quality improvement efforts of both public health and public safety initiatives.

Burnout and Stress

Looking at Stress, Burnout, and Trauma



Burnout Definition

“According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), burnout is defined as having feelings of extreme exhaustion and being overwhelmed.”



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Occupational Burnout

Occupational burnout occurs from:

- Providing care in **uncontrolled settings**
- Repeated **exposure to trauma**
- **Maladaptive** coping mechanisms
- **Lack of availability** of resources
- **Physical stress**



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Occupational Stress

Poor workplace
culture

Long shifts

Inadequate/low
staffing

Low wages

Multiple jobs



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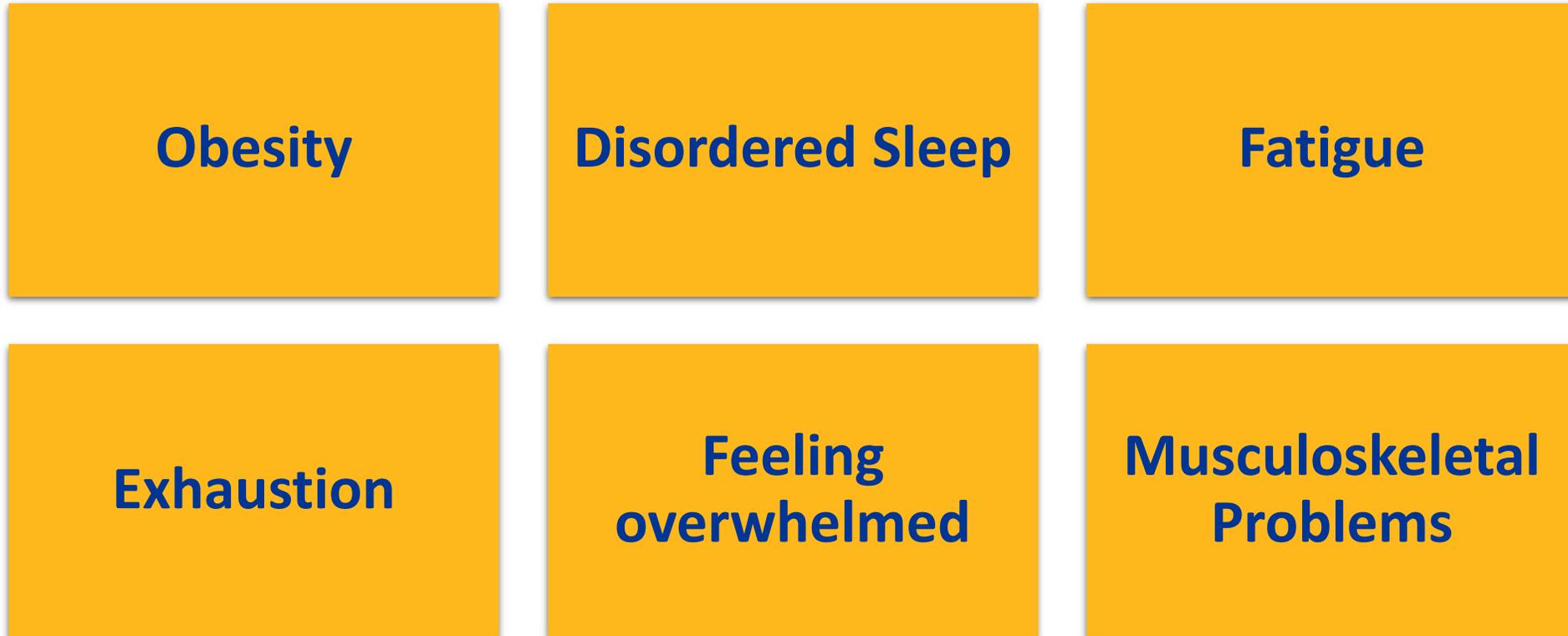
Burnout Impacts Psychological Well-Being

Increased risk of:

- **Post-traumatic stress disorder**
- **Suicide**
- **Anxiety**
- **Depression**



Burnout Impacts Physical Well-Being



Burnout Impacts the Workplace



Higher rates of turnover



Poorer quality care



Increased medical errors

Trauma

Looking at Stress, Burnout, and Trauma



Trauma

“Individual trauma results from an **event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has **lasting adverse effects** on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.”

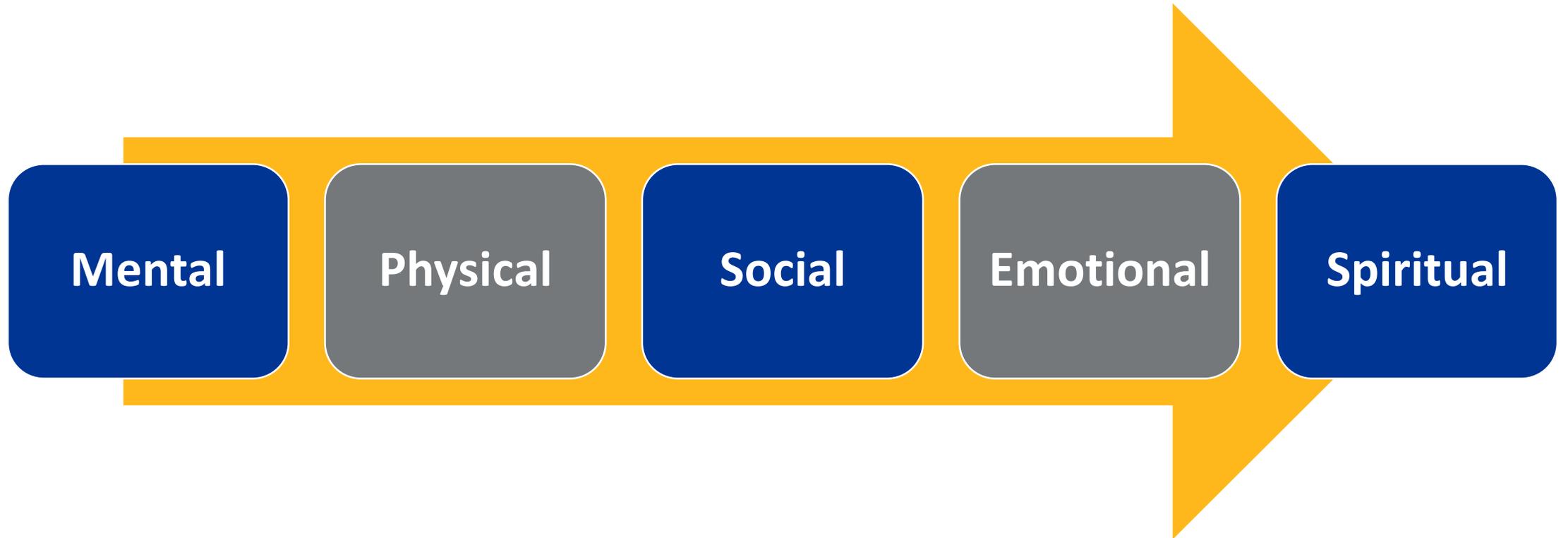


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Trauma



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Trauma Prevalence Worldwide

The **World Mental Health Survey** was a series of surveys to identify the prevalence of trauma.

70.4% of respondents endured at **least one traumatic experience** in their lifetime.



Trauma Prevalence in the US

- Report at **least one traumatic event** in their lifetime:
 - Men: 61%
 - Women: 51%
- **Societal** messages **toward men**
 - E.g., Men should be strong and not express emotions or ask for help
- Potential history of **trauma**



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Three “E’s” of Trauma

Event



Experience



Effects

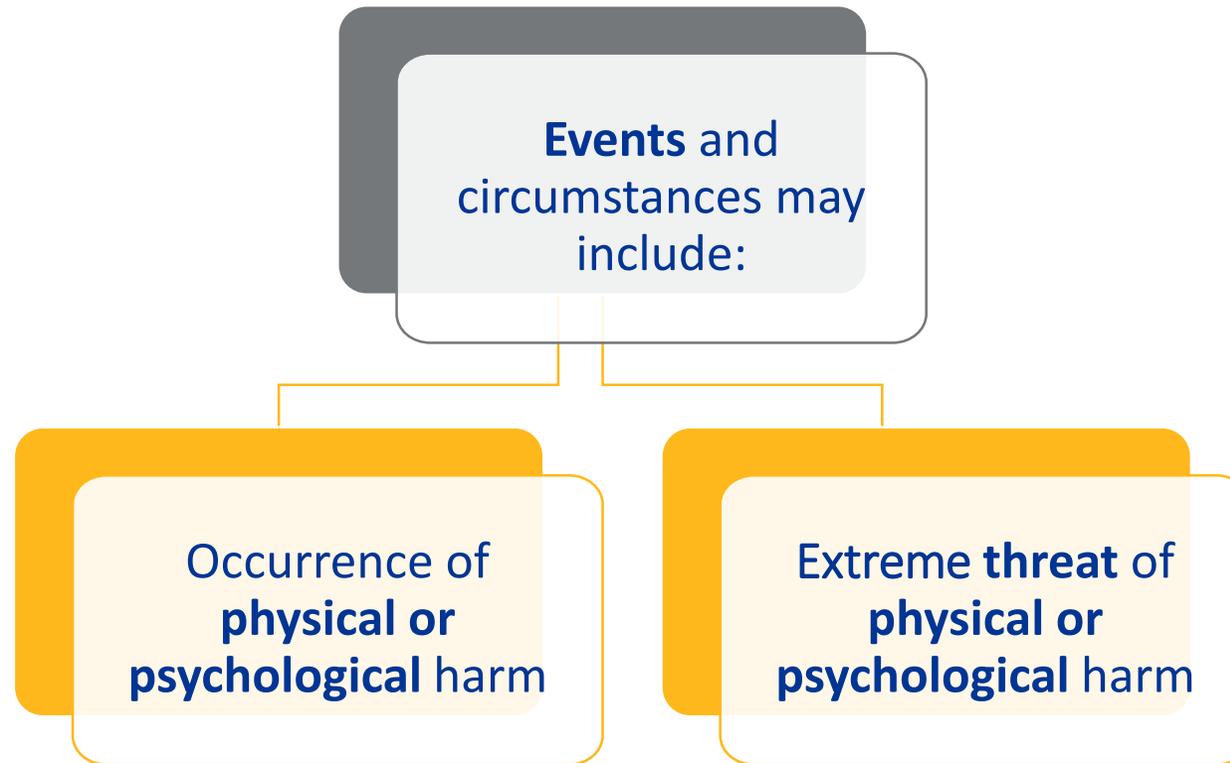


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Traumatic Event



Individual Experiences

Trauma is an **individualized experience** of an event

The same event can have very **different impacts** on individuals



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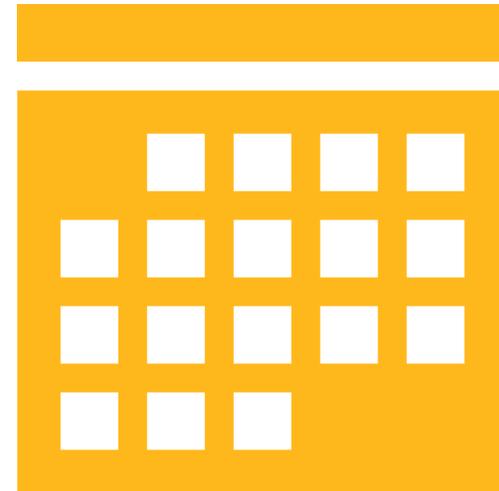
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Long-Lasting Adverse Effects of Events

Effects are based on the **experience** of an event and can be:

- **Very drastic**
- **Come on immediately** or have a **delayed onset**
- Can be **difficult for individuals to see the connection** between the event and its effect



Initial Reaction to Trauma

Agitation

Anxiety

Blunted affect

**Dissociation
and confusion**

**Exhaustion
and confusion**

Numbness

**Physical
arousal**

Sadness



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Delayed Reactions to Trauma

**Anxiety
focused on
flashbacks**

**Avoidance of
emotions**

Depression

**Persistent
fatigue**

**Fear of
recurrence**

Nightmares

**Sleep
disorders**



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Long-Lasting Reactions to Trauma

Long-lasting and repetitive trauma can result in more severe negative consequences including:

- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**
- **Acute Stress Disorder (ASD)**
- **Trauma-related stress disorders**
i.e., **mood and anxiety disorders**



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Impacts of Trauma

Trauma can also result in the patient believing in a **foreshortened future**.

- Loss of **hope** about the future
- Limited **expectations** about life
- **Fear** that life will end early
- Believing that normal life isn't possible



Impact of First Responder and Health Care Worker Interactions

- Survivors often have difficulty **regulating emotions** resulting in **heightened states** of anger, sadness and shame, which can impact patient care.
- Responses are **emotional extremes** where the patient is feeling either too much (overwhelmed) or too little (numbed).



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Impact of First Responder and Health Care Workers Interactions

First responder and health care worker interactions with trauma survivors may result in:

- **Emotional dysregulation**, including anger outbursts or feelings of apathy.
- **Avoidance of emotions** causing the patient to be noncompliant or argumentative.
- **Loss of hope** resulting in refusal of treatment or connection to resources.

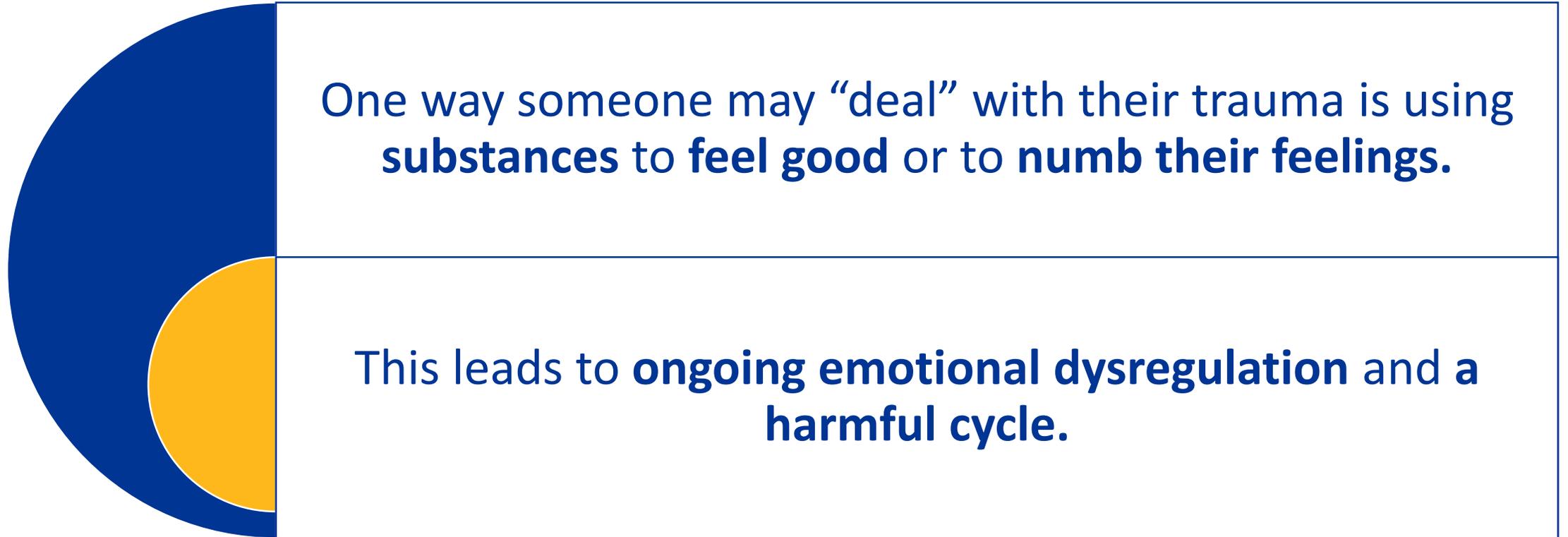


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Effects of Unresolved Trauma



Traumatic Experiences

Big T

Witnessing
violence

Captivity

Motor vehicle
collisions

Physical
abuse

Sexual abuse

Chronic
neglect

Unexpected
death of
loved one

War



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Traumatic Experiences

Little t

Being ignored	Betrayal	Failure	Being shamed, demeaned
Being bullied	Extreme, unfair criticism	Loss	Trust violations



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Compassion Fatigue

Looking at Stress, Burnout, and Trauma



Definition

Compassion fatigue happens when an individual has been exposed to a **traumatized person – not the traumatic event.**



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Characteristics of Compassion Fatigue

- **Anger**
- **Depression**
- Exhaustion
- Irritability
- Decreased ability to feel **sympathy and empathy**
- Decreased sense of **enjoyment** with work
- Decreased **satisfaction** with work
- **Inability** to make decisions and care for patients
- Increased **absenteeism**
- Interference with **sleep**
- Negative **coping behavior** (e.g., alcohol, drugs)



Impacts of Compassion Fatigue on First Responders and Health Care Workers

- **Shortness, bad attitude** with family
- **Withdraw** from family and friends
- **Negative feedback** to patients
- **Minimize** patient distress
- **Sarcasm**
- Express **disbelief** with patients
- Send the **wrong signals** to patients



Trauma Informed Care

Looking at Stress, Burnout, and Trauma



Pennsylvania – A Trauma Informed State

There is an increased need to make more **aware of the effects of trauma** and how those **effects of trauma affect patients**.

Governor Wolf announced **Pennsylvania as a Trauma Informed State** in May of 2020.



Principles of Trauma-Informed State

- **Ultimate goal is to minimize the risk of re-traumatization**
- **Safety**
- **Trust and transparency**
- **Peer support**
- **Collaboration and mutuality**
- **Choice and empowerment**
- **Cultural, historical and gender issues**



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Self-Care

Looking at Stress, Burnout, and Trauma



How to Provide Self-Care

Yoga

**Deep breathing,
stretching,
meditating**

**Get an adequate
amount of sleep**

**Find time to
exercise or take a
walk to reset**

Music therapy

**Understand and
recognize that you
are experiencing
compassion fatigue**

Focus on yourself

**Unplug from social
media**

**Spend time with
family and friends**

Spiritual support



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Workplace Self-Care

- Take **breaks between shifts** to provide some self-care
- Participate in **employee assistance programs**
- Don't be afraid to **say no** to tasks you can't complete
- Be **open** with your supervisor or boss **about your emotional needs**
- **Debrief** with co-workers and supervisor
- Do **exercise** at your desk (e.g., arm circles, wall push-ups, wall sits, wall push-ups)
- Take **5 minutes** and do some **meditation** to decrease your stress level



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Workplace Self-Care

PHQ-9 Screening – depression

[Patient Health Questionnaire \(PHQ-9\) \(ahrq.gov\)](https://www.ahrq.gov/patient-health/questionnaire/phq-9)

Screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT) – **substance use**

[SBIRT.pdf \(ehhapp.org\)](#)

Columbia Screening – **risk of suicide**

[Suicide-Risk-Assessment-C-SSRS-Lifeline-Version-2014.pdf \(suicidepreventionlifeline.org\)](#)



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Key Takeaways

What: **How** burnout, stress and trauma **affect** first responders and health care workers

Purpose: **Identify** signs and symptoms of burnout, stress and trauma

Benefits: **Identify and support** self-care **techniques** for first responders and health care workers



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Questions



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